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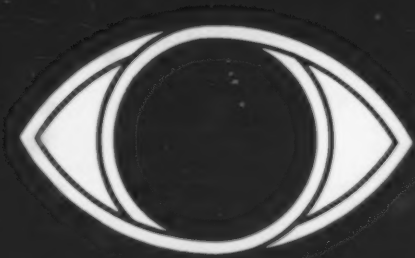
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ABSTRACT

The booklet describes seven Wisconsin outreach programs for visually impaired persons. Offered by the Educational Services Center for the Visually Impaired, the seven programs focus on the following topics (sample subtopics in parentheses): (1) comprehensive child evaluations (helping local school districts provide individualized educational programs); (2) low vision clinics (working with parents and teacher to optimize efficient vision use); (3) preschool services (annual parent conferences); (4) vocational education (on-the-job training in the local community, the role of the vocational education specialist); (5) cooperative education (providing support for integration); (6) professional services center (providing books, equipment, and supplies); and (7) access to information (providing resources and information to local school districts). (CL)

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VISUAL
IMPAIRMENT
EDUCATION
in WISCONSIN

VIEW OUTREACH SERVICES



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WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
HERBERT J. GROVER, STATE SUPERINTENDENT

EC 184720

Visual Impairment Education in Wisconsin-- Outreach Services

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Herbert J. Grover, State Superintendent

Victor J. Contrucci, Assistant Superintendent,
Division for Handicapped Children and Pupil Services

May 1985

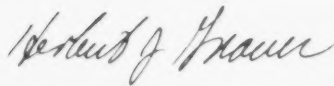
Bulletin No. 5376

Preface

Education is a great equalizer, making it possible for all individuals to have access to the same opportunities. Therefore, it is the charge of our public school system to meet the educational needs of all children regardless of where they live or attend school. We in Wisconsin can be very proud of our historic commitment to consistently performing this mission with integrity. The outreach services provided by the Department of Public Instruction's School for the Visually Handicapped play an important role in fulfilling this responsibility for our state's 700 visually impaired youth.

Through the outreach program's training sessions, consultative assistance, and specialized materials and facilities, parents and school districts are able to design quality educational programs for visually impaired children. This cooperative effort is based on the premise that the needs of this special population are so unique and are encountered so rarely that most local school districts are not prepared to meet them effectively and efficiently.

The privilege to dream and fulfill one's personal goals is central to the purpose of education. This promise must be held out to all children--to every young person who aspires to participate as a self-supporting, contributing member of society. I applaud all those who take part in helping visually impaired students equip themselves for a rich and rewarding future.



Herbert J. Grover
State Superintendent

A special thank you to Neldine Nichols, Steve Sperry, and Ken Tapp for their assistance and guidance in developing this booklet.

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Introduction

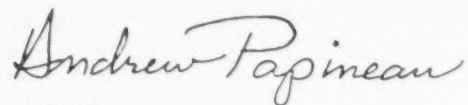
Meeting the special needs of visually impaired children is both a challenge and a responsibility for their parents and their schools. These handicapped youth require an educational program that will enable them to reach their academic potential and to function successfully in a rapidly changing world.

To help schools meet this educational challenge, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has developed several outreach programs that are available to all public and private schools in the state. Administered through the department's School for the Visually Handicapped in Janesville, these outreach programs enable school districts to provide quality individualized educational programs to the visually impaired youth in their communities.

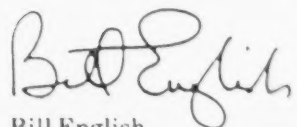
This booklet describes the seven programs offered through the Educational Services Center for the Visually Impaired and includes the names and telephone numbers of people to contact for more information. The seven programs focus on comprehensive child evaluations, low vision clinics, preschool services, vocational education, cooperative education, materials and equipment, and information resources.

Wisconsin has received national recognition for its innovative approach to serving visually impaired children. Part of this recognition can be directly attributed to the effectiveness of the outreach programs.

We are pleased to share this copy of "Visual Impairment Education in Wisconsin-Outreach Services" with you and look forward to continuing our long-standing commitment to serving visually impaired youth in our state.



Andy Papineau
Program Supervisor for the Visually Handicapped
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



Bill English
Superintendent
Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped

Comprehensive Child Evaluations

Helping Local School Districts Provide Individualized Educational Programs

Psychoeducational Evaluations

One of the many roles of the Educational Services Center for the Visually Impaired is to assist local school districts in evaluating the special needs of school-aged children through age 21. Designing or selecting an appropriate educational program for visually impaired children requires careful planning. A thorough review to determine a child's disability, handicapping condition, and need for special education is the foundation on which all planning is based.

To request an evaluation, a school district's special education administrator contacts the state program supervisor for the visually handicapped at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Evaluations are conducted at the Educational Services Center in Janesville by an interdisciplinary team of specialists tailored to the child's suspected exceptional educational needs. The team commonly includes a diagnostic teacher, the school psychologist, a specialist in low vision assessment and vision utilization, and an orientation and mobility specialist. A speech and language clinician or a physical therapist may be included as well as a qualified teacher of emotionally disturbed or multihandicapped students.

The evaluation focuses on the child's vision loss and how that loss affects his or her learning potential. The team members seek answers to questions such as: Does the child have an exceptional educational need in the area of vision? How has the child's vision loss affected his or her academic achievement? What educationally useful vision does the child have and how well does he or she use it? What are the most appropriate instructional media, aids, and materials for this child? How are family, social, and emotional factors affecting the child's education? How does the

vision loss affect the child's independent travel abilities? Is vision loss the primary deficit?

Specialists in functional vision assessment use a variety of tools designed specifically for the visually impaired child, such as the Barraga Visual Efficiency Scale, the Lighthouse Near Vision Test Symbols for Children, and the Feinbloom Distance Test Chart for the Partially Sighted. Certain psychoeducational assessment tools commonly used with sighted children, such as the Test of Visual Motor Integration or the Wechsler Intelligence Scale, are administered and interpreted by staff familiar with the special needs of visually impaired children. Commonly used achievement tests, such as the Spache Diagnostic Reading Scale or the Key Math Diagnostic Arithmetic Test, are administered in the media appropriate for the child; they are available in regular print, various large-print sizes, various ink/page contrasts, or braille. Some evaluation scales, such as the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts, have been changed and adapted to meet the needs of visually impaired children. Mobility specialists assess the child's knowledge of spatial vocabulary and concepts, independent travel skills both indoors and outside, and the use of residual vision while traveling.

Most evaluations are completed in one day. Occasionally more extensive evaluations are conducted over a period of several days, or a week or two for longer term observations and more in-depth evaluation.

When possible, the parents and a representative of the local school district are encouraged to accompany the child to the center; this procedure facilitates a mutual understanding of the child's needs and abilities and provides an opportunity for parents and school personnel to ask questions of the evaluation team. A small efficiency apartment is available without charge for families when overnight lodging is required.

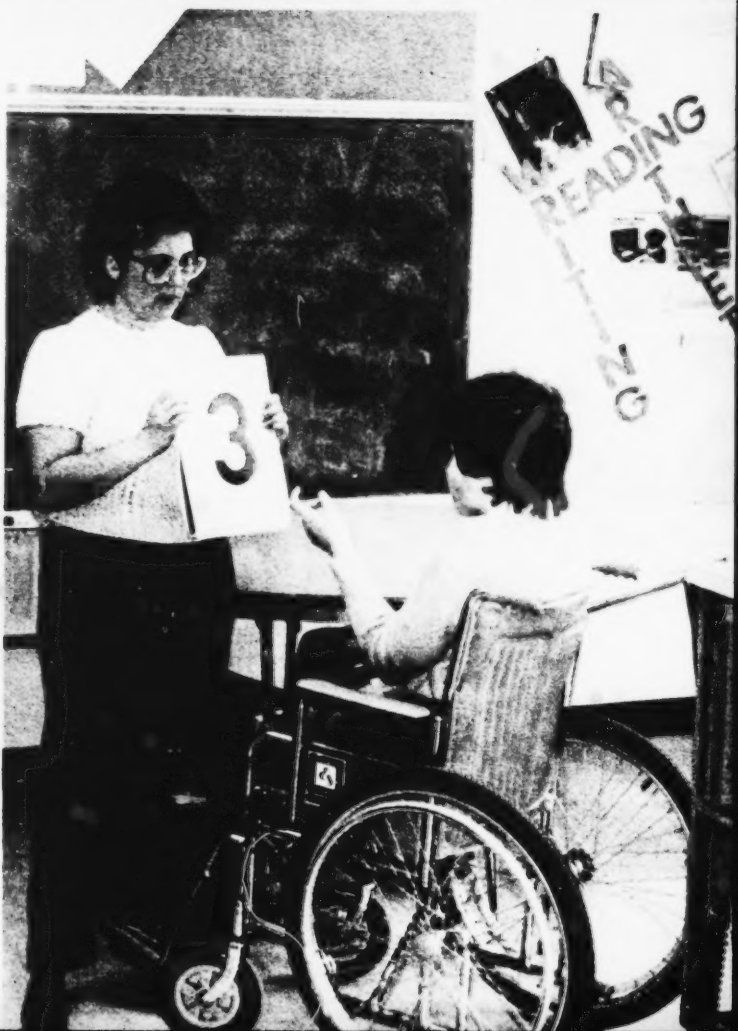
The results and implications of the evaluation are then developed into a written report that identifies needs and offers suggestions and information. Copies of the report are sent to the director of special education in the child's school district. The director usually shares the report with the child's parents and other school district staff. Frequently, the report is used by the school's multidisciplinary team to assist in developing an appropriate individualized educational program for the child. If the local district does not have the expertise of a certified vision teacher for the multidisciplinary team process, they can request assistance from the Educational Services Center.

Through this evaluation program, local school districts are able to plan the best possible educational program for children with exceptional educational needs in the area of vision.

Use of large-print materials to test visually impaired students provides a meaningful picture of their needs and abilities.

A thorough functional vision evaluation provides school districts with appropriate program strategies and techniques.

Closed-circuit televisions assist in the evaluation process through their ability to enlarge regular print to various type sizes. Closed-circuit televisions can be loaned to school districts through the Professional Services Center.



Low Vision Clinics

Helping Children Use Their Vision in the Classroom

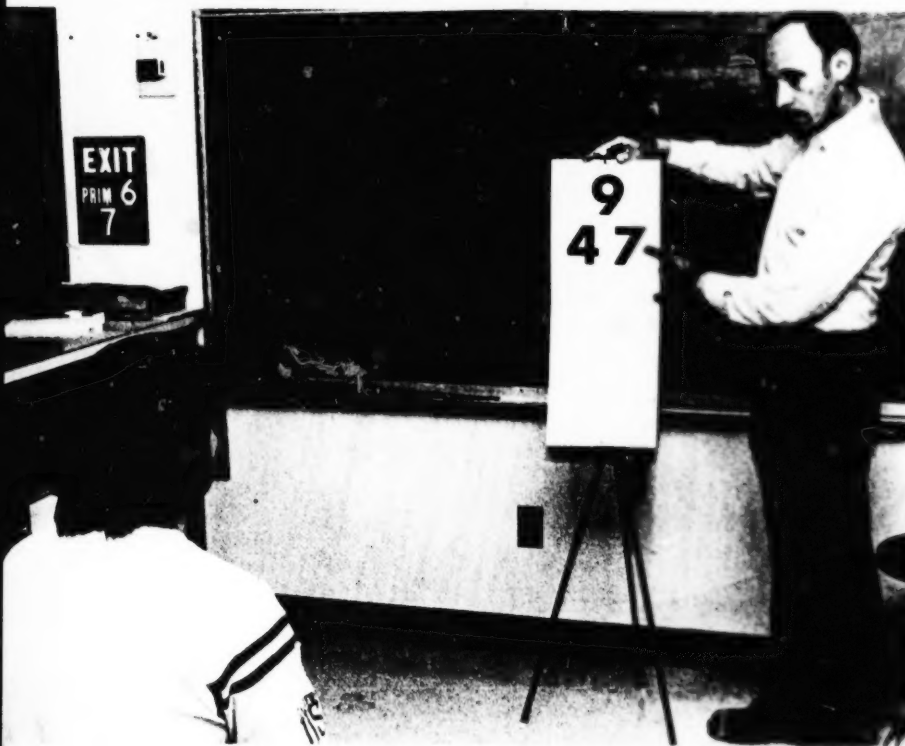
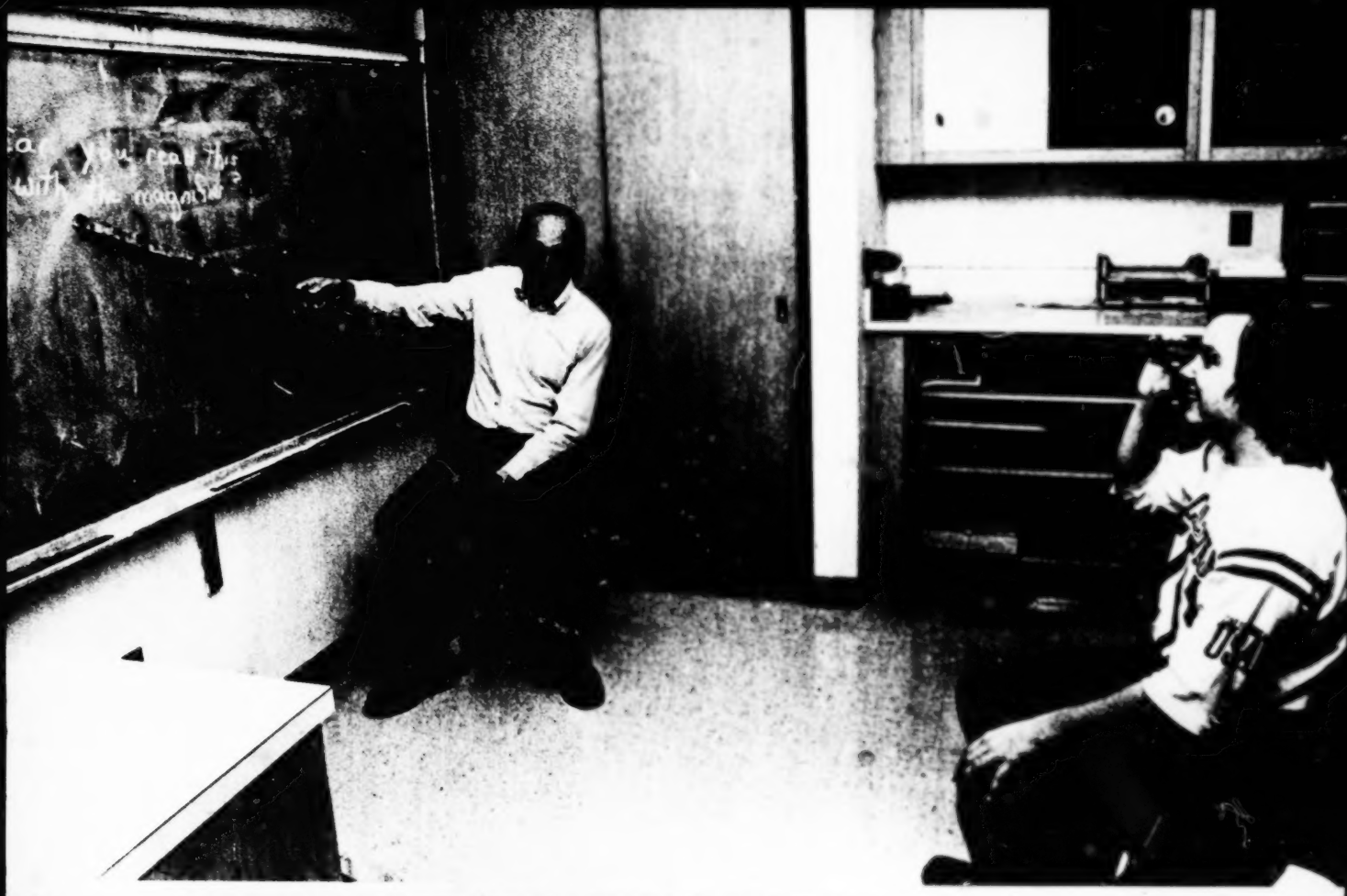
About 90 percent of the more than 700 visually impaired, school-aged children in Wisconsin are not totally blind but have usable residual vision. Modern low vision aids and adaptive techniques can help many of these children use their remaining vision more effectively. However, information about these aids is not always available through local school systems, and standard optometric or ophthalmological examinations do not always include clinical evaluations of children's low vision requirements. The Department of Public Instruction's low vision clinics were created to fill this gap. The clinics are designed to explore ways to help children with vision loss use their remaining vision as effectively as possible in the classroom and at home. A team consisting of a pediatric ophthalmologist from the University of Wisconsin Hospital, an optometrist and a low vision specialist from the university's low vision clinic, and four low vision specialists from the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped (WSVH), travels to each clinic site with its own equipment and supplies. The team meets with individual children at the clinic to evaluate useful vision with examination techniques designed especially for visually impaired youngsters.

Both parents and teachers attend the clinic with the child. The clinicians take the time to explain the child's vision loss. Parents are encouraged to ask questions to better understand what their child sees. Teachers work with the clinic staff to explore ways the child can use vision more effectively in school. A variety of hand-held magnifiers for near reading tasks and distance telescopes for chalkboard work are available for the children to try. Appropriate magnifiers are loaned to the children so that they may try them at home and at school. Nonoptical aids and adaptive classroom activities designed to optimize



Cory is using a low vision aid to help him complete his classroom assignment. The aids enlarge regular size type and come in a variety of sizes and powers.

efficient vision use are discussed with teachers and parents. The emphasis is on what the child can do rather than on what he or she cannot do. Several weeks after the clinic, a low vision specialist checks back with the school district to see if clinic suggestions have been followed and if the prescribed aids are being used properly by the child. Clinic staff are also available for telephone consultation if questions arise regarding teaching techniques or use of the aids. Four to six clinics are offered each year on a rotating basis in local school district sites throughout the state.



Results of low vision evaluations may enable a student through the use of aids to increase his or her functional vision. Evaluations include testing near and distant vision for ability to see board work, film, maps, and text material.

Preschool Services

Providing a Statewide Support System

The preschool years can be the most important years in the life of a visually impaired child. The foundations laid before the age of five significantly influence how the child functions later in life.

The preschool services specialist for the visually impaired operating through the Educational Services Center directs a support system for parents, home trainers, and educators to help them understand how vision loss affects a child's growth and development. The preschool services specialist also helps people who work directly with each individual child to obtain the information and resources necessary to provide the best possible program to enhance the child's physical, emotional, and intellectual development. After obtaining a referral from the state program supervisor for the visually handicapped, the preschool services specialist visits the child's home to evaluate the child and to work directly with the parents. Parents learn how their child's vision loss affects development and what they can do at home to help the child learn and grow. They learn about adaptive toys, eating and dressing skills, toilet training, movement, and exercise. Low vision stimulation materials are demonstrated and realistic developmental expectations discussed. Toys, adaptive aids, and educational materials are sometimes loaned to the parents. For support services, parents can be put in contact with other parents near them who have visually impaired children. They are provided information about county-sponsored early childhood developmental programs for children from birth through age two.

After the initial visit, the preschool services specialist provides ongoing consultation and support for parents, home trainers, and health nurses who may work with the young child.

Local school districts are required by law to provide individual educational programs for visually impaired children starting at the age of three if they are identified by the multidisciplinary

team as having a handicapping condition and a need for special education. The preschool services specialist helps the local school district evaluate the needs of the visually impaired child; design appropriate goals and objectives; and provide ongoing support, resources, and consultation to early childhood teachers.

Annual Parents' Conference

Each year, parents of visually impaired preschool children are invited to attend a conference to address the special needs of these children. The conference is held in a different area of the state each year. Presentations, workshops, and discussions provide an opportunity for parents to share experiences and approaches. Teachers and other school and support staff working with visually impaired preschool children may also attend the conference.

All children need downtime and Amy is no exception.





Amy must learn how to use her functional vision effectively. Getting close to the paper does not hurt her eyes.

Active parent participation is critical to Chelsea's development. Visually impaired preschoolers are provided much verbal and tactual stimulation by interacting with parents, siblings, and others.



Vocational Education

Preparing for the World of Work

Vocational Education Specialist

Like normally sighted students, visually impaired children have varied vocational potential. In their formative years, it is important to expose them to a diverse and challenging school curriculum that will develop this potential and help them make appropriate decisions about vocational and personal goals. A vocational education program should introduce the visually impaired student to a large number of skills and begin developing these skills through a variety of sequential courses. The vocational program should be designed to help students formulate a sense of who they are, what their capabilities are, and what they plan to do in the years following school.

The vocational education specialist at the Educational Services Center for the Visually Impaired is available to assist local school districts in designing appropriate vocational education programs for visually impaired youngsters in their schools.

After receiving a request from the state program supervisor for the visually handicapped, the vocational education specialist travels to the local school district to meet with the student and his or her parents, teachers, and guidance counselor in order to help the school district design and implement an appropriate individualized vocational preparation program for the child.

The vocational education specialist can provide the following services to local school districts:

- Evaluating the child's skills.
- Exploring vocational plans and objectives.
- Answering questions about the appropriateness of particular classes.
- Suggesting adaptations in equipment or teaching techniques.
- Discussing equipment safety.
- Sharing information about available materials, aids, and specialized equipment for the visually impaired.

- Providing information about post-high school training programs.
- Providing information about funding sources for continuing vocational education.
- Offering group inservices for vocational education teachers.
- Providing in-the-class assistance for working with an individual student.
- Explaining how a local teacher can become a designated vocational instructor through a program sponsored by the Department of Public Instruction.

On-the-Job Training in the Local Community

The Preparation for Employment Training Program is designed to meet the need for a comprehensive work training program for visually impaired students through a cooperative partnership between the local school district and community resources.

Visually impaired students ages 16 through 21 are eligible to participate. The focus of the program is to provide try-out employment situations within the child's home community. Community work sites within the private business sector are selected to provide the student with on-the-job work experience. Students are paid for up to ten hours of work per week for a ten-week trial period, after which the employer is encouraged to pay the student's wages on a continuing employment basis. The program, funded by the Governor's Employment Training Office (GETO), is designed to be an integral part of the student's total vocational training program received through the local high school.

The vocational education specialist from the Educational Services Center for the Visually Impaired can provide information about the program and assist local vocational education coordinators or cooperative educational service agency (CESA) vision teachers in involving local students in this program.

Hands-on experience provides Laurie with concrete vocational experiences for future planning.

Project Preparation

Project Preparation assists visually impaired students in developing realistic career goals. Any visually impaired student in grades 9-11 may apply. During a five-week session held each summer at the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped in Janesville, the student will develop a tentative written career goal and will be ready to take the necessary steps to achieve this goal. A student's individualized educational program may include the following:

- Vocational interest and aptitude testing.
- Employability skills evaluation.
- Prevocational experiences in career exploration.
- Vocational experiences, including on-the-job experiences in the Janesville community.
- Orientation and mobility skills evaluation and instruction.
- Daily-living skills evaluation and instruction.
- Communications skills exercises and group discussions.

The students are housed in the school's dormitories, eat in the school dining room, and may participate in planned evening recreational programs. The only financial responsibility of the parents is to provide transportation to and from Janesville.



Evaluating the fine and gross motor skills of visually impaired students is a key component to planning a sequential vocational program.

Visually impaired physically handicapped students are capable of vocational education with support and guidance. The sander, lathe, and bench grinder often become part of their vocational education training.

Cooperative Education

Providing Support for Integration

Janesville Cooperative Program

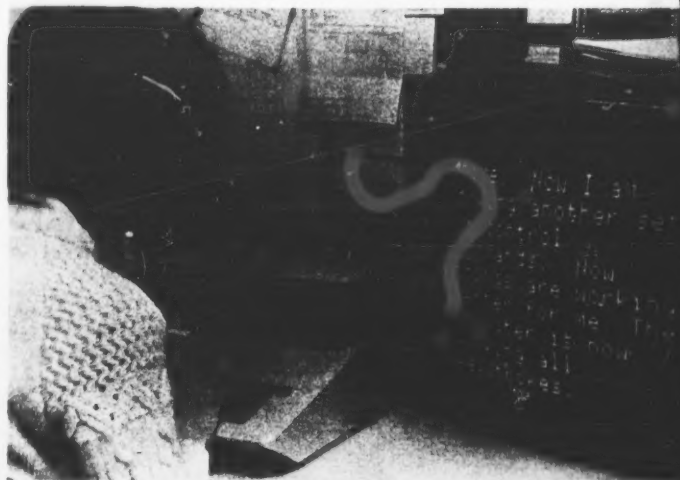
For many visually impaired children in Wisconsin, the question of program placement is a difficult one. Educators and parents must examine a child's individual needs and design or select a program within "the least restrictive environment" to meet those needs. Frequently, a visually impaired child needs to be integrated with sighted children but also needs strong support services and specialized resources to succeed in an integrated classroom. The Janesville Cooperative Program offers a combination of integration, support, and resources for either short-term adjustment or for long-term educational programming. The co-op program is available to any school-aged child in Wisconsin attending the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped (WSVH) who has a partial or total vision loss.

The student's individualized educational program is designed by the local school district so that the student attends both the WSVH and one of the local Janesville city schools (Van Buren Elementary School, Edison Junior High School, Parker Senior High School) or the district's technical college (Blackhawk Technical Institute).

While each child's schedule differs according to his or her needs, the typical student in the co-op program attends Janesville School District classes and activities from one to four hours per day and completes the rest of the school day at WSVH.

All grades (1-12) may participate in the cooperative program. With the combined offerings of these schools, an individualized program can be designed to meet the child's academic, vocational, co-curricular, and other personal needs. Length of participation in the program depends on the student's needs, parental guidance, and local school district placement decisions.

All academic classes offered at WSVH and at Parker Senior High School are available to co-op participants in grades 10-12. Generally, students take from one to four academic classes at Parker



A large-print monitor enables Gina to actively participate in the computer courses taught through WSVH and the cooperative education program.

and then complete their academic schedule at WSVH, including specialized classes in adaptive physical education, orientation and mobility, daily living skills, and co-curricular activities such as athletics, drama, forensics, and recreation.

Eleventh- and twelfth-grade students may also choose to attend classes at the Blackhawk Technical Institute through the co-op program. Selected vocational courses, such as auto mechanics, machine tool operations, and commercial and industrial food preparation and services are available to qualified students. Successful fulfillment of these course requirements can sometimes lead directly to post-graduation employment.

Participants in grades 7-9 take classes at Edison Junior High School. The students usually take one or two academic classes at Edison, such as foreign language, science, or mathematics, and then complete their school day at WSVH.

Children in grades 1-6 may also participate in the co-op program by attending classes at Van Buren Elementary School. Co-op participants usually take one class at Van Buren, such as social studies, language arts, mathematics, or music, but they may take more.



The cooperative education program helps Bill and Chad build self-confidence and a strong academic base. Note braille writers they use as "pencils" to take notes.

Special equipment enables Chad to crossover from tactile print to braille.



A program coordinator from WSVH meets regularly with teachers and students to monitor success, discuss problems, and provide needed support.

A structured support system is designed to maximize success while the student takes classes fully integrated with sighted peers. The elementary students benefit from early exposure to sighted modes of learning. They learn at an early age how to act and function in a large classroom. Junior-high students face the competition and challenges of a local city school and learn the importance of developing good study habits at an early age. For older students, the program fosters the development of independence and responsibility.

Students participate in the cooperative program for different reasons. Some students benefit from long-term participation in the dual program. For some students, the program provides excellent continuity of public school interaction during a short-term WSVH placement. For other students, the cooperative program serves as a transition for return to the local district program.

Daily transportation is arranged to accommodate class schedules designed for each individual participant. Students are considered for participation in the program as a result of student, parent, teacher, and local district consultation. Final approval is always in compliance with the child's individual educational program as designed by the local school district and approved by the child's parents.



Functioning successfully in regular education is a goal for all visually impaired students. The materials Ginger uses may be different but the outcome is the same for learning.

Professional Services Center

Providing Books, Equipment, and Supplies for Educating Visually Impaired Children

The Professional Services Center (PSC) in the Educational Services unit provides textbooks, recorded materials, equipment, and supplies to visually impaired school-aged children in Wisconsin. The library also provides resource information about obtaining additional educational materials for visually impaired children. The following services are available to all public and private schools throughout Wisconsin:

Books

- Large-print and braille books are available on a loan basis, free of charge.
- Large-print and braille books from the American Printing House for the Blind can be ordered by the PSC and loaned to school districts without charge.
- Large-print books can be produced by the PSC for sale to school districts at a nominal cost to cover the materials used.
- Braille books available from other sources can be ordered for school districts.
- Braille transcription of unavailable books can be arranged.
- Large-print copies of popular recreational reading books for elementary and junior high school students are produced by the center and distributed through the Wisconsin public library system.
- Tape-recorded material can be secured or recording can be arranged.

Special Equipment

The following special equipment is available for free loan to local school districts that have visually impaired students with exceptional educational needs:

- Braille writers
- Talking book machines
- Tape recorders
- Raised maps
- Light Box Kit and materials
- World Book Talking Encyclopedia
- Sensory Stimulation Kits
- Braille dictionaries
- Large-print dictionaries
- Closed-circuit television systems and magnifiers
- Optacons

Special Supplies

Special supplies available without charge to visually impaired students include:

- Braille paper
- Bold-line paper
- Raised-line and bold-line graph paper
- Abacuses
- Work-Play Trays
- Braille and large-print answer sheets

Consultation

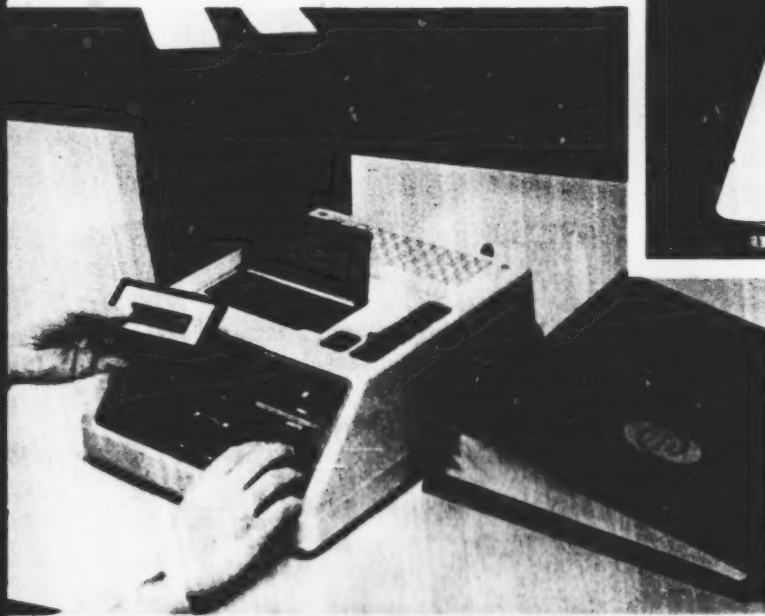
The PSC coordinator is available to assist visually impaired students, parents, teachers, and other professionals involved in the educational process. The PSC serves over 450 children in more than 100 school districts each year.

Talking book players, cassette records, and tactile maps increase the educational opportunities available to visually impaired students.



The Talking Book Encyclopedia enables visually impaired students to complete research assignments and reports. The encyclopedia's subject index is written in large print and braille.

The optacon enables Jenny to read printed materials through her sense of touch. By sliding a small camera across the printed page, the image of each letter is picked up by vibrating rods and transferred to her fingertips.



Access to Information

Providing Resources and Information to Local School Districts

Through the Access to Information Program, selected written materials about vision impairments and educating visually impaired children are available without charge to educators in public and private schools throughout Wisconsin. Administrators, teachers, and parents can select from 100 different pamphlets, booklets, reprints of magazine articles, lists, and bibliographies. The material, compiled by the staff at the Educational Services Center for the Visually Impaired is designed to offer the most useful information on a wide range of subjects related to educating the visually impaired child.

Topic areas include:

- Classroom and curriculum adaptations
- Low-vision children
- Testing, assessment, and research
- Social, emotional, and psychological concerns
- Future employment concerns
- Medical information about specific eye conditions
- Aids, supplies, and service organizations

Some specific titles include:

- Science and Art for Visually Handicapped Children
- Integration of Vision Stimulation in the Classroom
- Low-Functioning Vision Assessment Kit
- Counseling Families of Severely Visually Impaired Children
- Computer Applications to Braille
- A Guide to Understanding Strabismus and Amblyopia
- Recreation and the Visually Impaired Child
- Teaching Hand Writing to the Congenitally Blind
- Products for People with Vision Problems
- Evaluating and Stimulating Vision in the Multiply Impaired
- Understanding and Helping Parents of Blind Children

- Functional Implications of Diseases
- Basic Interpretation of Eye Reports
- What to Ask Your Child's Eye Specialist
- Optical Aids in the Classroom
- Information Resources for Parents of Visually Handicapped Preschoolers

Videotapes

In addition to printed materials, videotapes describing the specialized needs of visually impaired children are available to school districts. Staff at the Educational Services Center for the Visually Impaired travel throughout the state to present videotape inservice workshops for teachers, administrators, parents, and other persons involved in educating visually impaired children. The tapes are also available for free loan to school districts for local showings.

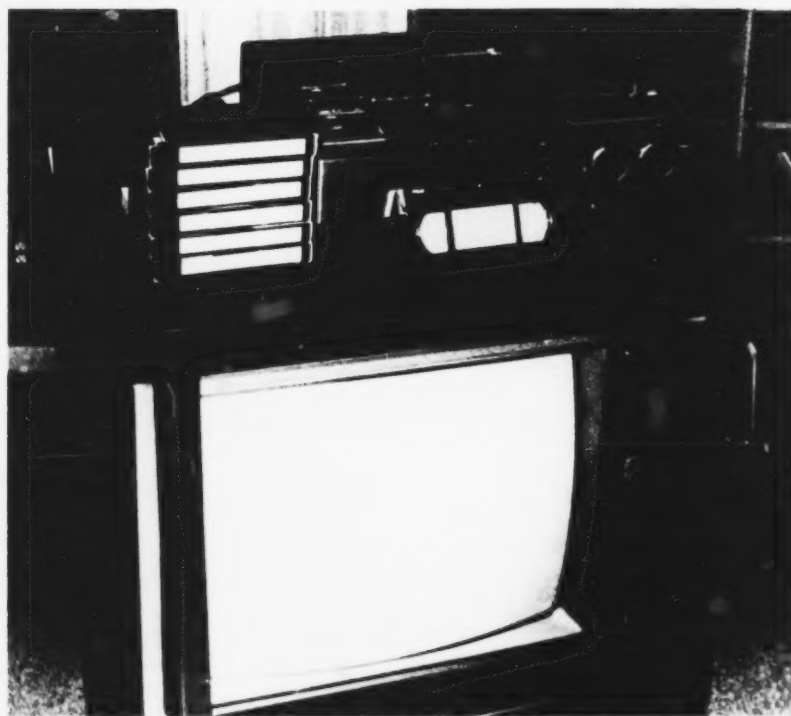
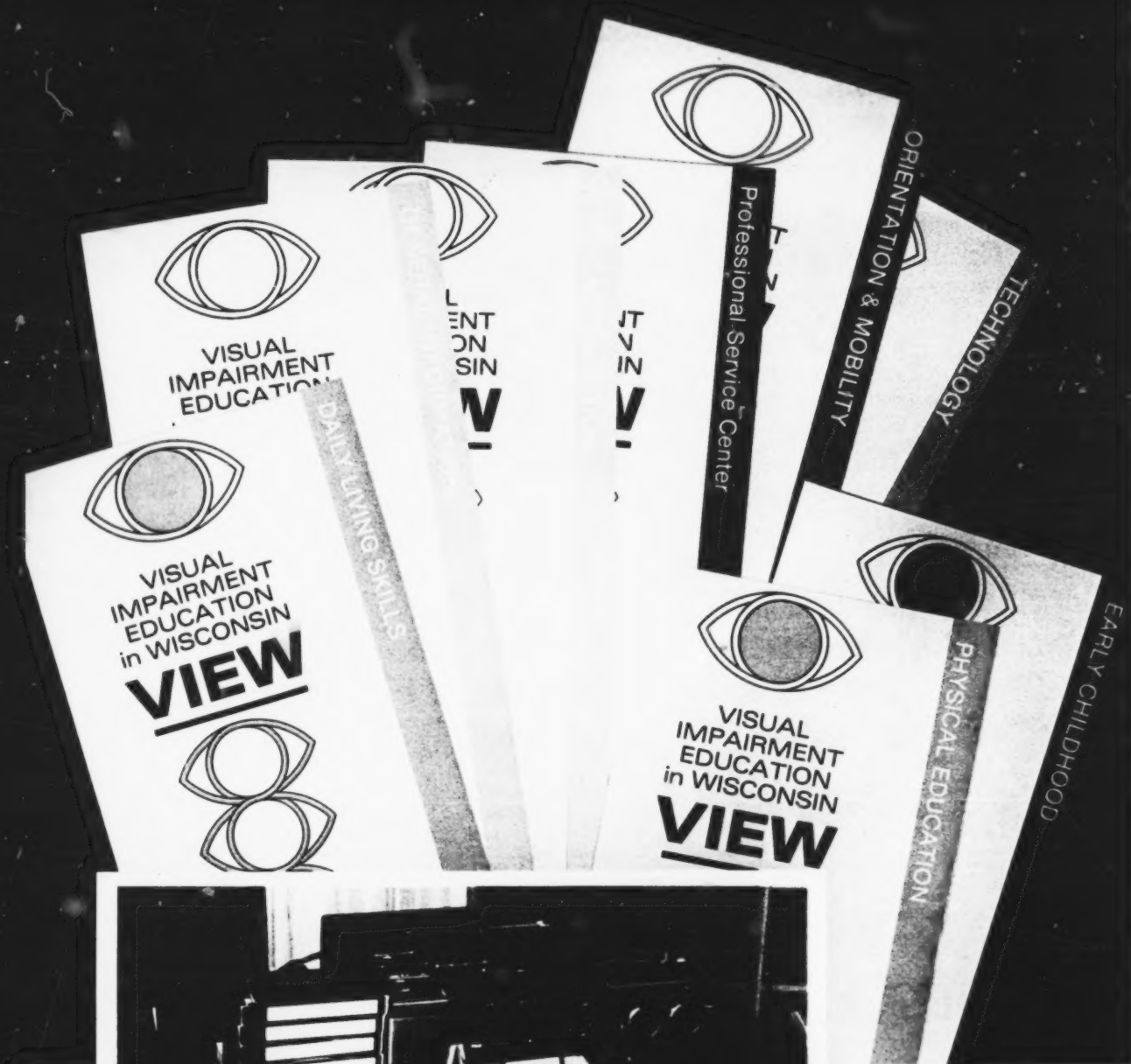
Tapes on the following subjects are available in either 1/2" Betamax, 1/2" VHS, or 3/4" cassettes:

- Orientation and mobility
- Daily living skills
- Physical education
- Vocational education
- Utilization of low vision
- Visually impaired children with multiple handicapping involvements
- Visually impaired preschool children

For more information about statewide outreach programs for the visually impaired, contact:

State Program Supervisor for the
Visually Handicapped
Division for Handicapped Children
and Pupil Services
Department of Public Instruction
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707
Telephone: 608/266-3522
or

The Wisconsin School for the
Visually Handicapped
1700 West State Street
Janesville, WI 53545
Telephone: 608/755-2950



The PSC also makes available booklets, brochures, guides, and other resource materials on visual impairments for use by parents, school districts, and community organizations.

Videotapes dealing with visual impairment programming are available through the PSC to local school districts. The 20-minute tapes focus on physical education, daily living skills, orientation and mobility skills, low vision, vocational education, early childhood, and multiply handicapped children.